

February 13, 2017

Director
Bureau of Land Management
20 M Street SE
Suite 950
Washington, D.C. 20003

2017 FEB 17 A 11:30

Dear Director of the Bureau of Land Management,

I am a homeowner, small business owner and resident of the City of Marietta in Washington County, Ohio. I am writing to protest the leasing of public lands in the Wayne National Forest during the scheduled March 23, 2017 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale. I protest the proposed leasing of the following parcels:

Parcel # ES-001-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058226 ACQ
Parcel # ES-002-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058227 ACQ
Parcel # ES-003-03/2017 BLM Serial # OHES 058228 ACQ
Parcel # ES-004-03/2017 BLM Serial # OHES 058229 ACQ
Parcel # ES-005-03/2017 BLM Serial # OHES 058230 ACQ
Parcel # ES-006-03/2017 BLM Serial # OHES 058231 ACQ
Parcel # ES-007-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058232 ACQ
Parcel # ES-008-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058233 ACQ
Parcel # ES-009-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058234 ACQ
Parcel # ES-010-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058235 ACQ
Parcel # ES-011-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058236 ACQ
Parcel # ES-012-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058237 ACQ
Parcel # ES-015-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058240 ACQ
Parcel # ES-018-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058243 ACQ
Parcel # ES-020-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058249 ACQ
Parcel # ES-022-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058251 ACQ
Parcel # ES-023-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058252 ACQ
Parcel # ES-025-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058254 ACQ
Parcel # ES-026-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058255 ACQ
Parcel # ES-027-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058256 ACQ
Parcel # ES-028-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058257 ACQ

Below is a statement of reasons for my protest:

Reason #1: Objection to national forest use for industrial purposes: I vehemently oppose the use of national forest land for industrial purposes. As a tax payer, I want my monetary contribution to the national forests to go toward preservation and conservation of nature, not support of private industry. Our nation's footprint of natural lands untouched by man is at risk of shrinking. I implore leaders such as yourself to protect this unspoiled land for future generations. Our

natural environment cannot speak up for itself. A tree cannot write a letter. A bird cannot lobby Senators. A fish cannot become buddies with policy experts and decision makers. The river's scream cannot be heard when toxic chemicals quietly flow into it. As a very concerned U.S. citizen and taxpayer, I am speaking up for the best interests of our land's animals, trees, plant life and waters.

Reason #2: Environmental impact associated with hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"): If these lands are leased, there is a strong likelihood that they could be used for oil and gas exploration and eventually for fracking. Fracking consumes an excessive amount of fresh water. The process involves the injection of toxic chemicals deep into the earth to fracture rock to release oil and gas. I believe we should be very conservative in our water use. There is no guarantee of rain, and we could easily find ourselves in a water shortage. Also, after water is used for fracking, it is highly contaminated. Currently much of this tainted water is buried deep under the earth in injection wells, some in my own county. These wells have been proven to cause earthquakes in Oklahoma. There also is risk that a truck full of this chemical-laced water, or brine, could have an accident on a local roadway and contaminate groundwater, otherwise damage the environment and cause a major public safety issue. There also is extensive release of methane into the air during the process of starting a well. Methane is more dangerous to the ozone and global warming than carbon dioxide. Damage to the ozone cannot be repaired. Removal of trees, especially mature trees, to make way for industrial development puts the forest at greater risk for fire.

Reason #3: Health risks associated with fracking: Closely related to the environmental risks noted above, each carries health risks. Methane release into the air can cause respiratory problems. Damage to the ozone can lead to rising cases of skin cancers because damaging rays more easily penetrate the earth's atmosphere. The use of toxic chemicals by industry is linked to rising cancer rates. Also, when the public cannot use national forests and streams for wellness activities and recreation, it impacts our physical fitness, psychological relaxation and quality of life to enjoy hobbies such as camping, hiking, fishing and boating.

Reason #4: Lack of energy crisis or significant economic benefit to justify environmental and health risks: There is ample energy produced domestically today to provide for all citizens' needs. There is not an energy crisis. I object to the use of a national forest for financial gain of industry or private landowners, especially when there is no need for the resources potentially to be taken from the land. Moreover, there are a tremendous number of active wells across the country and capped wells that can be reactivated. Companies and private citizens who wish to earn money through oil and gas exploration have opportunities to pursue these ventures on privately owned properties. It is not in the best interest of the general public to allow leasing of our national forest to benefit a relative few private landowners and corporations.

Reason #5: Low lease valuation of public land: I object to the extremely low amount of money lease holders would potentially have to pay for rental of parcels in this lease sale. I would like to use Parcel # ES-025-03/2017 BLM Serial #OHES 058254 ACQ and Parcel # ES-003-03/2017 BLM Serial # OHES 058228 ACQ as examples to explain my point. Located in closest proximity to the Ohio River of all of the parcels, the annual rental fee for each parcel is stated as only \$90. A taxpayer like me would be lucky to lease a compact car for \$90/month much less per

year. If the Bureau of Land Management is going to raise money for the public as compensation for allowing industry to use public lands, the bureau should put a much higher rental price on this land. The rental fee should be at least as valuable as what a retailer or any other business would expect to pay to rent such an extensive amount of property.

Reason #6: Lack of public transparency to leasing process and prohibitively complex objection path: It is extremely difficult for the average citizen to become informed about national forest leasing activity and to express opinions. The bureau needs to be much more proactive in communicating its activities through local media, social media, public service announcements and public signage. The current process inherently is much easier to navigate for industry (i.e., companies with teams of lawyers and legal assistants) and for well-educated, wealthier individuals with strong reading and research skills and Internet access. The average Ohio taxpayer cannot be expected to find notices online, read through hundreds of pages of environmental assessments and find land parcel serial numbers in order to lodge a complaint.

Reason #7: Uncertainty over Native American tribes' stance and potential lack of acceptable effort to contact them: In the final environmental assessment, DOI-B LM-E5-0030-2016-0002-EA, prior to the scheduled leasing, the Bureau of Land Management stated that it attempted to reach seven Native American tribes that could have some interest in the Wayne National Forest lands coming up for lease. The bureau said it did not receive a response from any of the tribes. I object to moving forward with the leasing until the bureau can provide proof that it has indeed reached each tribe and received a response from that tribe. It is possible that the bureau's previous outreach was completely ineffective. For example, a letter mailed to a tribal leader may not have reached that individual if his or her address had changed or if he or she was deceased.

Thank you for considering my statement of reasons for my protest of this leasing. In closing, I respectfully ask that you exert your power for the protection of the natural environment of the Wayne National Forest and the health and wellness of the U.S. residents and taxpayers like me who live near it and value it.

Sincerely,



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